

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00  
CU-02 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 BIB-01 /049 W  
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R 301209Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 319  
INFO USIA WASHDC  
AMCONSUL BOMBAY  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMCONSUL MADRAS

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EO 11652: NA  
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, IN  
SUBJ: "MAINSTREAM" EXPIRES WITH A BIBLICAL GASP

REF: NW DELHI 11071

1. REFTEL REPORTED THE CLOSURE IN JULY OF THE PRESTIGIOUS INTELLECTUAL BIMONTHLY "SEMINAR." ITS EDITOR DECIDED TO CEASE PUBLICATION OF THE JOURNAL RATHER THAN SUBMIT TO THE PRE-CENSORSHIP IMPOSED BY THE GOI AFTER THE JULY ISSUE CARRIED A SERIES OF ARTICLES HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE EMERGENCY.

2. A SIMILAR FATE HAS JUST BEFALLEN ANOTHER PUBLICATION, THE LEFTIST-ORIENTED WEEKLY "MAINSTREAM." ALTHOUGH NOT FORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE CPI, "MAINSTREAM" HAS WIDELY BEEN REGARDED AS THE PARTY'S INTELLECTUAL JOURNAL, AND ITS PAGES HAVE USUALLY CARRIED ARTICLES DEALING WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN BLOC COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS VARIOUS ASPECTS OF INDIAN SOCIALISM. ITS EDITOR, NIKHIL CHAKRAVARTTY, IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE  
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CPI'S TOP THEORETICIANS.

3. "MAINSTREAM'S" DIFFICULTIES WITH THE GOI BEGAN SOME MONTHS AGO WHEN CHAKRAVARTTY BEGAN PUBLISHING EDITORIALS INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE EMERGENCY. BY OCTOBER MOST OF ITS ADVERTISING HAD BEEN CUT OFF AND

CHAKRAVARTTY WAS FORCED TO INTRODUCE AUSTERITY MEASURES SUCH AS PRINTING THE JOURNAL IN A PLAIN COVER RATHER THAN THE PREVIOUS GLOSSY COLOR COVER. HE BECAME INCREASINGLY BOLD IN HIS EDITORIALS, HOWEVER, ATTACKING THE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL, CALLING FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS, CRITICIZING THE "CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY" TRIAL BALLOON, AND AT ONE POINT REFERRING TO SAJAY GANDHI AS THE "PRINCE OF WALES." THE FINAL STRAW APPARENTLY CAME IN THE DECEMBER 11 EDITION IN WHICH CHAKRAVARTTY EDITORIALY CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO HOLD DOWN PRICES IN SPITE OF THE EMERGENCY. CHARGING THAT THE GOI STILL CATERED TO THE "VESTED INTERESTS" AT THE EXPENSE OF THE FARMERS AND WORKERS, HE CONCLUDED: "THE TWENTY-POINT PROGRAMME AND THE HEROIC HARANGUES DURING THE PERIOD OF THE EMERGENCY HAVE RESULTED IN ONLY APPLYING A COSMETIC OF DEMAGOGY OVER THE UNCOMFORTABLE REALITY OF GAPING DISPARITIES IN THE WORKING OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY." HE CALLED ON ALL "PATRIOTIC FORCES" (A EUPHEMISM FOR PRO-COMMUNISTS), INCLUDING "FORWARD-LOOKING CONGRESSMEN," TO UNITE TO PERSUADE THE GOVERNMENT TO LIFT THE EMERGENCY.

4. OUR PRESS SOURCES TELL US THAT IT WAS THIS EDITORIAL WHICH LED THE GOI TO IMPOSE PRE-CENSORSHIP ON "MAINSTREAM." CHAKRAVARTTY DECIDED NOT TO SUBMIT AND IN THE FINAL (DECEMBER 25) ISSUE WROTE A POIGNANT EDITORIAL ENTITLED "GOOD-BYE TO ALL THAT" TO ANNOUNCE THE JOURNAL'S CLOSING. CITING THE "CHANGED LANDSCAPE OF TODAY" AS THE REASON FOR CEASING PUBLICATION, HE ENDED HIS PIECE WITH A REFERENCE TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, A BIBLICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUOTE, AND A BORROWED BUT FAMILIAR PHRASE: "WE SHALL OVERCOME."

5. COMMENT: "MAINSTREAM'S" CLOSING LEAVES FEW INDEPENDENT INTELLECTUAL JOURNALS LEFT IN INDIA. "HIMMAT," EDITED BY RAJMOHAN GANDHI (MAHATMA GANDHI'S GRANDSON), CONTINUES ITS STRUGGLE AGAINST VARIOUS GOI PRESSURES. AFTER PUBLISHING ARTICLES CRITICAL OF THE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL, "HIMMAT" WAS TOLD BY ITS PRINTER IN SEPTEMBER THAT THE JOURNAL COULD NO LONGER BE PRINTED UNLESS IT WAS PRE-CENSORED. GANDHI WAS TOLD BY OTHER PRINTING PRESSES IN BOMBAY THAT THEY TOO WOULD INSIST ON SUCH PRECONDITIONS, AND AS A RESULT HE LAUNCHED AN APPEAL FOR RS 50,000 SO THAT "HIMMAT" COULD PURCHASE ITS OWN PRESSES. ACCORDING TO THE LATEST ISSUE, THE APPEAL TO SUBSCRIBERS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, AND THE GOAL HAS ALMOST BEEN REACHED. MEANWHILE, THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT HAS ACCEPTED A WRIT PETITION FILED BY GANDHI

IN WHICH HE CHALLENGED THE VALIDITY OF SEVERAL DECISIONS  
BY GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA CENSORS.

6. THE END OF "MAINSTREAM" IS BEING VIEWED BY SOME  
OBSERVERS AS ANOTHER FACET OF THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE  
AGAINST THE CPI. CREDENCE IS LENT TO THIS BY THE FACT  
THAT CHAKRAVARTTY'S CRITICAL EDITORIALS RATHER CLOSELY  
PARALLELED THE CRITICISM OF CONGRESS AND GOI POLICIES  
THAT HAS BEEN DISSEMINATED OF LATE BY CPI LEADERS AND  
OFFICIAL ORGANS SUCH AS "NEW AGE."  
SCHNEDIER

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